

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6727

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR,SP,UK
SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL ON VISIT OF FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN

1. AT LUNCH SEPT 9 WITH THE CHARGE, FONMIN OREJA'S CHIEF OF CABINET (JAVIER RUPEREZ) SAID THE VISIT HERE OF BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN HAD GONE VERY WELL, AND HAD SERVED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT WITH REGARD TO GIBRALTAR THERE EXISTED "A NEW ATMOSPHERE". THE GOS HOPED THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD BEGIN SOON, AND WAS OPTIMISTIC OVER THE PROSPECTS.

2. THEY HAD MADE CLEAR TO OWEN, RUPEREZ SAID, THAT SPAIN WOULD MAKE NO MOVE TO EASE THE RESTRICTIONS SURROUNDING GIBRALTAR IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY MOVE BY THE BRITISH TO BEGIN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. SINCE HMG HAD RECENTLY COMMITTED ITSELF IN A DOCUMENT TO DISCUSS WITH ARGENTINA ALL THE ISSUES INVOLVING THE DE-COLONIZATION OF THE FAULKLAND ISLANDS, INCLUDING THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY, THERE WAS NO REASON WHY IT COULD NOT BE THE SAME REGARDING GIBRALTAR.

3. WHILE DISCARDING THE TERM "OREJA PLAN" AS AN OVERBLOWN JOURNALISTIC INVENTION, RUPEREZ DISCUSSED AS A LIKELY APPROACH THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS BEING MATCHED BY SOME EASING OF THE SPANISH RESTRICTIONS ON
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GIBRALTAR. PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD FIND A COUNTERPART IN PROGRESSIVE ELIMINATION OF THE RESTRICTIONS, WITH CULMINATION IN AUTONOMY FOR THE GIBRALTERIANS (ALONG THE LINE OF AUTONOMY PLANNED FOR SUCH SPANISH REGIONS AS CATALONIA) AND SOVEREIGNTY FOR SPAIN. (WE NOTE THIS IDEA HAS ALREADY BEEN VENTILATED IN UNSOURCED PRESS STORIES HERE.)

4. ON THE ANECAPOTAL SIDE, RUPEREZ OBSERVED THAT HE HAS MET PEOPLE EASIER TO LIKE THAN OWEN, AND HE HAD NOT LIKED OWEN'S REFERENCE TO CSCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPANISH RESTRICTIONS ON GIBRALTAR. THE ORIGINAL RESTRICTIONS HAD BEEN BRITISH, CONTENTED RUPEREZ, WITH SPANISH WORKERS IN GIBRALTAR TREATED AS SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS AND FORBIDDEN EVEN TO SPEND THE NIGHT ON THE ROCK. OVERALL, HOWEVER, OWEN HAD DONE WELL DURING HIS VISIT, SAID RUPEREZ, HAD EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR SPANISH EC MEMBERSHIP, AND HIS POINT THAT BRITISH SUPPORT FOR SPANISH EC MEMBERSHIP WAS NOT CONDITIONED ON SETTLEMENT OF THE GIBRALTAR PROBLEM WAS BOTH PROPER AND WELCOME.EATON

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